AN ACT Relating to closing the achievement gap in order to provide all students an excellent and equitable education; amending RCW 28A.300.137; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.410 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.660 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature finds compelling evidence from five commissioned studies that additional progress must be made to address the achievement gap. The studies also contain specific recommendations for action by the legislature, colleges of education, school leadership, teachers, and communities. These recommendations are data-driven and drawn from education research, as well as the personal, professional, and cultural experience of those who contributed to the studies. The legislature finds there is no better opportunity to make a strong commitment to closing the achievement gap than in legislation affirming the state's constitutional obligation to provide opportunities to learn for all students without distinction or preference on account of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender.
Therefore, following the priority recommendations from the achievement gap studies, the legislature intends to:

(a) Provide resources to support parent and community involvement and outreach efforts by public schools, including such items as additional notices and communication to parents, translations, translators, parent and community meetings, and school events within the community;

(b) Require that teachers demonstrate cultural competency in the classroom and with students at each level of state teacher certification and provide additional opportunities for professional development in cultural competency for current teachers;

(c) Create local alternative routes to teacher certification for paraeducators and individuals in the communities surrounding schools and school districts that are struggling to address the achievement gap; and

(d) Reexamine the study recommendations regarding data and accountability and identify ways for the education data accountability system to address these needs.

(3) The legislature encourages school districts to consult with the office of the education ombudsman in developing plans for parent and community involvement and outreach.

(4) Comprehensive and consistent collection and review of data, by the superintendent of public instruction, that is disaggregated in the smallest units allowable by law that do not identify an individual student is an important factor in closing the achievement gap. This disaggregation of information is important to compile in order to see exactly where each subgroup lies. Establishing a single, streamlined discipline data collection system will reduce the administrative burden on schools and districts.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 28A.300 RCW to read as follows:

All student data related reports required of the superintendent of public instruction in this title must be disaggregated by at least the following subgroups of students: White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, low income, transitional bilingual, migrant, special education, and
NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410 RCW to read as follows:

The professional educator standards board shall convene a working group with expertise in a wide array of cultures and cultural contexts to identify a list of model standards for cultural competency and make recommendations to the education committees of the legislature on the strengths and weaknesses of those standards. For the purposes of this section, "cultural competency" includes knowledge of student cultural histories and contexts, as well as family norms and values in different cultures; knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and community and parent outreach; and skills in adapting instruction to students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.660 RCW to read as follows:

The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall provide guidance to school districts where data indicates significant achievement gaps among subgroups of students and for large numbers of those students. The office of the superintendent of public instruction is responsible for identifying the school districts that have the largest achievement gap and should receive priority for assistance in advancing cultural competence skills in their workforce. The guidelines shall also take into consideration the recommendations of the achievement gap task force report to the 2009 legislature. The purpose of the assistance is to develop partnership grant programs between the districts and teacher preparation programs to provide one or more of the four alternative route programs under RCW 28A.660.040 and recruit paraeducators and other individuals in the local community to become certified as teachers. To the maximum extent possible, the board shall coordinate the recruiting Washington teachers program under RCW 28A.415.370 with the alternative route programs under this subsection.
Sec. 5. RCW 28A.300.137 and 2008 c 298 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

((Beginning))  
(1) The center shall work in collaboration with the commissions established under chapters 43.113, 43.115, and 43.117 RCW and representatives from the five achievement gap study groups commissioned in 2008 to review the challenges and solutions addressed by the five achievement gap study group's reports and develop a plan for implementation of strategies intended to address the achievement gap. The implementation plan must establish clear benchmarks that are to be achieved.

(2) In January 2010, the center for the improvement of student learning shall report ((annually)) to the superintendent of public instruction, the state board of education, the governor, the P-20 council, and the education committees of the legislature on the implementation plan required under subsection (1) of this section and shall, thereafter, annually report on the implementation status of strategies to address the achievement gap ((for African-American students)) and on the progress in improvement of education performance measures for African-American, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, and Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native students.

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